

Creation

Social Science and Humanities

QUARTERLY



CREATION SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES SOCIETY

The Creation Social Science and Humanities Society (CSSHS) was incorporated in Wichita, Kansas, in 1977. The CSSHS is educational, and will promote and disseminate information on the implications of the Biblical creation model of origins for the social sciences and humanities, with emphasis on the development of these disciplines in accordance with the rapidly emerging and increasingly well established natural scientific models of Biblical creation.

This **Quarterly Journal** is directed toward teachers and students of the social sciences and humanities, especially in institutions of higher learning. The CSSHS may also publish books, monographs, and other writings, and sponsor speakers, seminars, and research projects related to its educational purpose.

IRS tax-exempt status was granted December 30, 1977. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Voting membership is initially by invitation of the Board of Directors of the CSSHS to candidates eligible on the following basis:

- a. persons with at least a baccalaureate degree in the social sciences or humanities; or
- b. persons 18 years old or over, who have office in another creation-science organization with beliefs substantially identical with those contained in the CSSHS **Statement of Belief**, for at least one year immediately prior to applying for membership in the CSSHS. Voting membership dues are \$10 (foreign, \$11 U.S.) per year.

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Both voting and sustaining memberships include subscription to the **CSSH Quarterly**, and are reckoned as beginning and ending in September.

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

In light of the recent upsurge in popular media and periodical attacks against the creationist movement and individual creationists the following general statement was prepared. Perhaps our readers will find it helpful.

When superstition and mystical thinking come into conflict with the domain of clearly established scientific knowledge the greatest weapon of the latter is the light of full and public disclosure. Superstition and mysticism recoil from the light brought from mere disclosure of clear and persistent brute fact. There is really no contest. The scientist armed with such clear and persistent evidence needs no other weapon. He can afford to be good-humored and magnanimous. He can allow his opponent every generosity and point of doubt. He is calm, collected, at ease, for he knows that at the proper time his weapon of clearly presented fact will be wielded with cold, deliberate, and decisive effect upon the lie that has dared to invade his domain.

In the current debate it is the creationists and not the evolutionists who have displayed this all too telling attitude of open and magnanimous confidence. The rise of modern scientific creationism is not to be explained in terms of religious or political persuasion by fundamentalist fanatics. The rise of modern creationism is accounted for in terms of an *explosion* of data and evidences in all fields of scientific inquiry in the last 25 years. A recent statement by one leading spokesman for the evolutionist side, that "nothing has changed; the creationists have not a single new fact or argument" is patently absurd. Virtually all the data presented by creationists in the numerous debates across the country were undiscovered at the time of the Scopes trial. On the other hand, virtually all the evidences for evolution presented by Darrow in the Scopes trial are now obsolete or refuted (i.e., the Nebraska man). Whining attempts to cloud the issue with arguments against the religious beliefs, intelligence, integrity and character of the creationists are beside the point. Meanness and lack of general civility serve only to weaken one's position and point-up the absence of really sound rebuttal evidence.

Regarding the substance of the creation vs. evolution controversy the matter is fairly straightforward to most fair minded persons. *Neither* evolution or creation is scientific in either the factual or theoretical sense. Both are fundamental interpretative frameworks. As regards evolution, Karl Popper (*Unended Quest*, 1976, p. 151) has stated that "Darwinism is not a testable scientific theory but a metaphysical research programme." The same could be said for creationism. In the course of scientific work based upon either framework there will be specific aspects which are theoretical and others which are factual, but the ultimate framework is rooted in the realm of faith, not empirical science. Empirical evidences and arguments related to the two frameworks or models as the creationists call them are circumstantial and personally persua-

sive rather than critically conclusive in the sense of an ideal scientific test.

Recognizing this fact, specific issues, evidences, arguments, quotes, mis-quotes, out-of-context quotes, lies, distortions, instances of hitting-below-the-belt and so forth, will best be dealt with case by case in an atmosphere of personal respect and civility. Then let individual scientists, teachers, students and ordinary citizens weigh the evidence presented by both sides and be persuaded in their own hearts. What could be more reasonable than that?

Paul D. Ackerman

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Dear Editor,

I am thankful for so many small groups like CSSHS all over the country that are working in various aspects of Biblical Principles applied to many areas of life. May the Lord Jesus grant our country a reprieve from judgment and a gracious revival to turn the tide of secular humanism that is currently dominating all areas of life in our society and enable us to return as a nation to our biblical foundations in every area of life and thought!

I remain sincerely

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

R. Steven Harris

*8865 Oak Park Drive — #6
Oak Creek, Wisconsin 53154*

Dear Editor,

The article "Myths of Origin and the Theory of Evolution," by Paul Gosselin (Vol. III, No. 3) has raised two questions in my mind.

First, on page 7-8 he states: "The modern theory of evolution was born during the nineteenth century . . . (Darwin) had been preceeded by the studies of many other individuals . . . Lyell . . . Lamarck . . . Malthus . . . The challenge that Darwin faced was that of constructing a materialistic explanation of the origins of man . . ."

I do not agree with this statement. It appears to me that "they" had to find an evolving man to fit into an already evolving cosmos, which had no need to turn to religion. An evolving cosmos did not need a created man.

History forces this on me. I know no other way to handle the following: 1745 — Comte de Buffon and his theory of a cometary collision with the sun causing

the planets; 1755 — Kant and his nebular hypothesis; 1796 — Laplace and his condensing rotating gas clouds. These predated all those you quote.

In other words, astronomical evolution preceded and dignified geological and biological evolution. We must recognize the historical sequence.

Second: What is science? I propose the following definition:

A person is 'doing science' when he uses the experimental method to examine those qualities of reality that are capable of being rigorously tested. These qualities of reality are reduced to instrument readings and verified by being repeatable under controlled conditions. This procedure assures objectivity.

Science cannot wander far from 'the experiment' due to the complex and dynamic nature of reality. Consequently, science is very limited. Not all aspects of present reality can be experimented with, *much less* the distant past or far reaches of space.

In areas not accessible to science, the best man can do is to gather observational data and systematize it. The structure of systematized data is subjective due to the 'a priori' organizing axioms. To call systematized knowledge "science" is to make science a vague enterprise. The gathering of observational data (at a distance, or in a non-manipulative setting) is different from gathering data from repeated experimentation.

*In His service,
Russel C. Moe
109 E. Arcadia
Peoria, Ill. 61603*

NOTICE TO CSSHS MEMBERS AND TO SUBSCRIBERS OF THE CSSH QUARTERLY

Memberships and subscriptions expire in **September 1981**.

Unless your membership or subscription is renewed by **OCTOBER 31, 1981**, the Fall 1981 issue of the *CSSH Quarterly* (Vol. IV, No. 1 issue) will be the last issue you receive.

Please send in your membership renewal (\$10; \$11 U.S. for members residing outside the U.S.A.) or subscription renewal (\$12; \$13 U.S. for subscribers residing outside the U.S.A.) as soon as possible before **October 31, 1981**. Thank you.

Membership and subscription fees will be \$2.00 higher after **October 31, 1981**.

Racism and Origins

Paul Ellwanger

An alibi for racism is evolution speculation. Creationist scientists, on the other hand, do not need the race concept for making sense out of people differences on this planet. Races (over 25 of them) and stocks (as Mongoloid, Negroid, and Caucasoid) are inventions of evolutionary biologists and anthropologists. The many arbitrary races are subdivisions of stocks. As defined in World Book Encyclopedias: "A race is made up of people who have a fairly definite combination of distinguishing physical traits handed on from parents to children."

Creationist scientists recognize the "kind" as the basic people-unit, commonly referred to as mankind, while evolutionists allege that races evolved from lower to higher life forms. Scientists cannot make a distinction between the blood and cells of any of the alleged races, but such distinctions can be made between humans and animals.

The fabrication of races and stocks by evolutionists supports their unfounded speculations of natural selection, survival of the fittest and their explanation for physical differences between groups of people. But since intellect and individual capability would also have had to have evolved by the same process, the evolutionist teaching on stocks and races inescapably leads to racism, whether evolution-believing people like it or not, and that racism is being greatly intensified by the exclusive teaching of evolutionism throughout worldwide education and the media.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Bergman, J., *Evolution, Race, and Equality of Intelligence*, 1979, a reprint from the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*.

Morris, H. M., *Scientific Creationism*, 1974, from Creation-Life Publishers, POB 15666, San Diego CA 92115. Striking differences are amplified and referenced between evolution-science and creation-science on racism and scientific aspects of origins in the light of both the evolution and the creation models, offering the world a scientifically plausible alternative to racism and its global divisiveness.

Paul Ellwanger receives his mail at 2820 Le Conte Road, Anderson, S.C. 29621.

A Constructed Dialogue Between a Christian Graduate Student and His Nonbelieving Professor

Timothy D. Stabell

Editor's Note:

The following article is written in the form of a dialogue between a Christian graduate student and his nonbelieving professor. It is an imaginary dialogue although it is based upon actual conversations that occurred between the author and a noted historical sociologist during the time the author was completing a M.A. degree in sociology at the New School for Social Research in New York City. The general topic of the various conversations which the present article attempts to reconstruct was whether the author really belonged in sociology. Subsequent to these conversations and the completion of his sociology degree the author transferred to the Westminster Theological Seminary where he completed an M.A. degree in theology. The author is presently affiliated with the African Inland Mission headed for Zaire.

To facilitate the sense of dialogue the professor will be referred to as Dr. Smith. This is not his true name.

Stabell: Dr. Smith, I made this appointment with you in order to discuss some of my reactions to the courses that I have had from you and some of my own thinking about the problems of doing sociology. I've been very excited by much in your particular approach to the discipline and many of your emphases involve things that I would want to incorporate in my own efforts. At the same time, however, in some ways it seems to me that the whole orientation and direction of sociology is wrong, presenting a false, distorted and destructive view of man in society and in the course of history.

Smith: I'm glad you came by. To begin with let me say that I've sensed some progress in your thinking, judging from the papers you've given me. I think you are becoming more aware of the necessity of approaching sociology with an eye to historical process and detail.

Stabell: Yes, I hope so. I agree that it is important to look at what happens in societies through time in coming to understand them, and to look closely into the details of life as these express more general historical processes.

Smith: I have also sensed, however, that what you really want to do is not in fact sociology. I wonder if you shouldn't be in a theological school rather than here. Your concerns seem to be fundamentally different than ours. I see

Timothy Stabell receives his mail at 1779 Ferndale Ave., Abington, PA 19001.

nothing inherently wrong with a "spiritual concern" *per se*. Some people are naturally more troubled by questions of the ultimate meaning of life than are others, and they should probably pursue those questions. But an interest of this kind leads away from sociology in our sense — from the purely historical study of social institutions.

Stabell: It seems to me that you brought up this objection after the first paper that I did for you. As a result of that criticism and of the valuable things that I saw in your approach I began to try to adapt my perspective to yours. I began increasingly to use your language and, more importantly, to ask your questions. But as I have given the whole matter more thought, I've begun to see that there is a real danger for me of compromising the commitment that I have to Jesus Christ and to his word. It has also become increasingly clear to me that, from this point of view, sociology and history simply cannot be done truly apart from biblical categories from which to interpret the data.

Smith: It sounds to me like you don't really understand what it is that we are trying to do here. We want to understand social history on its own terms. When you introduce religious language like this you inevitably end up with a kind of "uniformitarianism" that destroys a real interest in the particulars of any given social situation. What you are looking for are the "spiritual realities" behind history. The diversity of different histories of different peoples is flattened out into an eternal struggle between faith and unbelief, between the darkness and the light.

Stabell: Perhaps we ought to start by looking at your perspective on history and sociological methodology. I think I can show that in fact it is your approach that flattens history and that a Biblical point of view is essential if historical particulars are to retain their true individuality. But again, there are aspects of your method that I find very exciting. For example, you have a lot to say about the importance, in doing sociology, of looking closely at religious belief, or, more broadly speaking, "structures of consciousness." From your point of view it is necessary to understand the fundamental stance toward and definition of the cosmos that characterizes a particular culture or civilization.

Smith: Yes indeed. What a man believes the world around him to be, what he feels is appropriate action in that world, what he thinks he must do in order to be "saved," and the nature of the salvation that he seeks will largely determine the character of his life. This is true collectively perhaps even more than individually. The direction of the development of whole cultures is in part set by their cosmologies, ontologies, ethics, anthropologies and theologies. But all this needs to be seen from a wider perspective. As you know, I see myself as continuing in the tradition of Max Weber's analysis of civilizations.

Stabell: Your understanding of Weber I have also found very helpful indeed. You argue cogently that his best known work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, is largely underestimated because it is not seen in the perspective of the rest of the things that he did. He was not simply out to show that capitalism grew out of the Protestant Reformation. Rather, he wanted to contrast the uniquenesses of Western culture with development in other civilizations. He could not help but see that "world-view" was a very significant variable in the course of a culture's history.

Smith: You seem to be headed in the right direction, but I suspect we will still end up coming out at different points. Weber's interest was to understand

the uniqueness of the social institutions of Western culture. I suspect you are looking for something else. It is true that he had a more substantial interest in religion than did Marx, with whom he is usually contrasted. But they both were after sociological understanding of the world in which they lived. The difference between them is that Marx seemed to feel capitalism was the natural outcome of dialectical history. Weber, on the other hand was impressed by the fact that only the West came to be the locus of highly rationalized forms of capitalism and entrepreneurship, yes, but also science, law, technology, individualism and practically every area of life. He saw "ideas" as well as material reality as playing a significant role in the evolution of the differences among civilizations.

Stabell: I certainly agree that we end up coming out at very different points; radically different. And I want to explore that difference. But in so doing I don't want to give up the implicit claim that the Bible makes with regard to the interpretation of socio-historical reality as well as "spiritual" reality. In fact, I don't believe the two can be separated. You would agree, would you not, that every fact must be seen in its whole context in order to be understood properly?

Smith: Yes. So called sociologists and historians have said a lot of things that simply are not true because they don't take into account wide historical and cultural realities. They don't know history, they make assumptions about the nature of change or evolution that don't fit the facts. "Man" or "Society" are seen as having an essential "Nature" throughout all time and in all places and individuality is not really understood. Psychologists assume that the Western "individual" is "Man" *per se*.

Stabell: OK, what I'm arguing is that part of the whole context within which social facts need to be interpreted if they are to be understood truly is their relation to what the Bible says about what life should be like; what a man's rights and responsibilities are before God and other men. Part of the question that I am raising here is "How does a sociologist determine what is significant in the culture or society he is examining?" How do you see Weber answering that question, and how would you answer it?

Smith: That is a very important question. To answer it I think we need again to look at the overall thrust of Weber's work. His concern, finally, was with universal world history. He began, perhaps, seeking to understand Western capitalism, but as he looked at comparative histories of the major world civilizations, he saw that the uniqueness of the West extended beyond its economic system. He began increasingly to focus on the characteristically Western forms of rationalism and rationality which seemed to have a universal significance and value — as examples — universal science; a certain formal individual equality before the law; and perhaps most significantly, a fact that I have focused on in particular, a move in the West away from tribal loyalties that set group against group and clan against clan. Instead there has been a move toward a universal individualism.

Stabell: And you are suggesting that this perspective is how one should go about determining what is significant in a given social situation?

Smith: Yes, and we can do that in at least two ways. First, we can look for the causal chain leading up to these results in the West. We can see some of this

as coming out of Greek philosophy, some of it out of Christianity and its peculiar emphases, some out of Roman law, other aspects out of specific political and economic situations and developments. As Weber argues, the Protestant Reformation was crucial. But so was the specifically Western form of the City, if you look at his essay by that title. Secondly, we need to look at what in other cultures has prevented this kind of pattern from developing. Why did not China, where science was far ahead of the West in Marco Polo's day, develop the powerful technology and scientific know-how that we have? What in its world-view and/or social structure stood in the way?

Stabell: I believe that here you have hit on a method that a Christian could use with real benefit. I'm convinced that we could learn an awful lot by looking at the specific historical processes that have brought various cultures to where they are today. I think that where we would differ, however, is in how we go about determining what in a culture is significant and what that significance is. You have said something about how Weber, and you following him, would go about determining what to look for. If I understand you correctly, you would look for those aspects of culture that either inhibit or promote "universal individualism".

Smith: Essentially, yes. I would contend, though, that this must be done in continual close contact with actual historical data; the actual histories of actual peoples. We need to see how these developments are fleshed out in detail.

Stabell: I think I understand your procedure. What you propose is that we examine all kinds of historical situations — the Reformation in Europe, the great Awakening in New England, the Basuku tribe in Zaire — looking at the "structures of consciousness" that characterize each setting, trying to find the specific ways in which various people have either been moved toward or blocked from developing what you have referred to as "universal frames of discourse," or what I called "universal individualism".

Smith: I am suggesting that this is what will be found to be significant by those who take the trouble to do careful historiography with an eye to world-historical developments.

Stabell: What I'd like to do at this point is to throw out an alternative point of view or approach to the study of society, one which admittedly borrows from some of the methods you suggest, but which I hope is controlled by a Biblical world-view and a commitment to Jesus Christ. Then we can come back and look more closely at how our approaches differ.

Smith: Good. I'm interested in why you are so insistent on doing sociology at all. If your interest is in the nature and expression of faith then you should pursue that. But it seems to me that that kind of concern is different from an investigation of the sociological consequences even of religious experience. On the one hand, are you not being distracted from your real concerns when you try to do social history? On the other hand, your spiritualizing perspective very quickly begins to destroy your historical sociological analysis. You have to be continually reminded to do sociology, not a "history of the spirit!"

Stabell: I'm often tempted to agree with you that after all, my Christian faith doesn't really have anything to do with sociology! My tendency has been to see the antithesis between the practice of sociology and the Biblical world-view as

so great as to demand my giving up the endeavor of doing sociology altogether. And under some definitions of the word "sociology" I suppose that would indeed be necessary. If that term implies all or most of your basic assumptions then, yes, I would have to give it up — I would gladly give it up, because it would have nothing to do with what I want to do. But several considerations prevent me from doing that. In the first place, I am continually impressed by the fact that the Bible has an awful lot to say about social reality. I find it defining very carefully what things ought to be considered as the significant variables in any given social situation. It is very clear from the Bible what things are relevant, what one should look for, how one should measure social institutions, "structures of consciousness," historical developments and decisions. It gives us a pretty clear picture of what makes for a good society and what things are destructive of that goodness.

Smith: Already you are leaving the fold. Ethics is an important subject, but again, this is not sociology. As sociologists what we want to look at are the facts — the historical particulars and specifically, social facts and processes. But we are not out to make ethical judgments.

Stabell: Yes, I am talking about ethics, but I'm talking about something else, too. What I'm trying to focus on is how we go about determining what in a culture should be considered relevant and significant. We can't look at everything. We also have to have some scheme for determining what that significance is; how it is to be measured. Now it seems to me that this process is inevitably ethical at least in part. When Weber, or you for that matter, focus on particular questions as the important questions to ask in coming to understand what is really significant about a particular situation, is that not because you have an idea of what society should and should not be? Is this not why you choose to look at some things and not others? Now I'm not saying that either you or Weber have a clear utopian vision or anything like that. But it does seem to me that the process by which we come to judge the significance of a social phenomenon involves our ethical reactions to the world around us. It appears to me anyway that you approve the move away from tribal particularism toward more "universal frames of discourse."

Smith: Whether or not I approve is irrelevant. The question is whether or not this has in fact taken place. The difference between our approaches is that the framework advocated by men like Weber and myself has emerged out of vast, extensive and intensive historical research. What we are describing is the course of world history. We are seeking to account for social reality as it is in terms of what Weber called "universal history;" what I have referred to as comparative historical sociology. On the other hand, what you are suggesting seems to come "from above."

Stabell: Are you advocating a kind of empiricism then? Don't you as a sociologist believe that all human thought, including the sociologists, is necessarily governed by social and cultural conditioning? Don't we already have to have categories with which to analyze data before we can even begin to see it? How can you claim that your point of view arises "out of" the data?

Smith: No, that's not exactly what I'm saying. I grant that we all of course come at the world with culturally governed norms. But being in the West gives a certain advantage. Our own civilization is increasingly in contact with other world-views, forcing us to a wider perspective than in the past. We are

increasingly part of a shrinking "global village." Then too, as sociologists we must be careful to continually expose our theories to the data. In fact, the best cure that I know for your kind of skepticism is a good hard look at some history; in other words, actually doing what I am talking about, trying to get close to the details of the lives of men and women in their world, their cultures, and the changes through which they move at significant historical moments.

Stabell: That is in fact the direction I'd like for us to move in now. Could we discuss one of the papers that I did for you a while back? One in which I actually tried to utilize your method and point of view pretty closely. Reflecting on that effort has given me, I think, a better grasp of the problems in an approach like yours, and a clearer understanding of how I think sociology needs to be done. The particular paper I am referring to was entitled "Martin Luther in Civilizational Perspective."

Smith: As I recall, you were particularly interested in investigating the interplay of Greek and Hebrew views in Luther's thought, experience and preaching. You were, I believe, trying to demonstrate the particular ways in which Hebrew thought forms, with which he had come in contact through the Scriptures, reacted against hierarchical, Aristotelian Greek structures of consciousness in which the Catholic Church was steeped. You saw here one of the things I have often emphasized; the significance of "civilizational encounters" at important historical moments. Such clashes have frequently provided a radical prophetic element, a new understanding of reality and of appropriate action, bringing men to break away from older structures and social patterns.

Stabell: I very much enjoyed doing that paper. It was fascinating to observe the various influences that bore on Luther's life. But I also experienced certain frustrations both in doing the paper and then after in thinking over what I had written. To begin with, as I read and studied about his life, I was very quickly overwhelmed by the vast amount of material that would have to be taken into account if one was to say that he really understood Luther in his sociological significance. One would have to know the exact import of each of the separate streams of thought that fed into his culture and experience — Occamism, Thomism, mysticism and Augustinianism, to mention only a few "categories." Then there is the economic and political situation in all its detail, to be taken into consideration, plus the fact that none of these things can be understood as an isolated phenomenon but must be seen as continually interacting with each of the others. One could even legitimately raise the question as to whether or not these are in fact defensible categories. Are there, for example, different kinds of mysticism with very different kinds of influence in history, and in our situation here, on Martin Luther? Then, if one is truly interested in Luther's relevance for comparative world history, one has to compare him! But that means knowing other situations equally well! I began to realize the truth of the statement that in order to know anything, one really has to know everything.

Smith: But in your study you did seem to reach some seemingly valid conclusions. You had the help, of course, of other historians and their judgments and evaluations. Plus you had a perspective from Weber and from my own lectures suggesting a framework into which he might fit.

Stabell: Yes, I was quite aware of that, and I used that framework very significantly. Nor do I want to deny entirely the validity of Weber's assessment of the Reformation in terms of its economic and social consequences. I think it

could be of value to look at that kind of question, though I'm not sure I agree with all his conclusions. But I was also aware of the fact (and became more aware of this later in thinking back) that I was using another framework and set of categories as I sifted through what I read. I was putting the data through two siftings, as it were. One, sociological in your sense, the other more Biblically controlled. As a result I don't think I was true to either point of view entirely.

Smith: Then why not give up one or the other, if this is a source of conflict? You don't have to do sociology. Go to seminary! It is inevitable that we each have our own personal concerns. The only question is whether or not that personal perspective can be brought into line with the wider concerns of world history.

Stabell: That brings me to another of the frustrations I experienced while doing and since having done that paper. The separation you are suggesting is an impossible one. It destroys both "halves." On the one hand, ■ "spiritual" concern separated from actual history is not Biblical spirituality. You know this from your study of the Hebrews and, too, of the Reformation. In both of those cases men saw God's word as dealing very significantly with their lives *in* the world. Moreover they saw their God as acting *in* the world. But more importantly for our discussion here is that any sociology trying to operate out of ■ perspective other than that of the Bible and its categories — its definitions of what are the relevant or significant questions — is going to be false sociology. I saw this happening in my own work and that of other historians as we analyzed what was going on in Luther's life and times.

Smith: I'm not at all sure I see what you are saying. I think you are going to have to illustrate just what you mean. There is always going to be more than one interpretation of an event or situation. It is not necessarily the case that only one will be true.

Stabell: OK. One of the biographies of Luther's life that I read was Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther*. That is ■ book that you have some trouble with isn't it?

Smith: Erikson's problem is that he doesn't know cultural history. He puts Luther in the wrong context. He tries to see Luther as a modern man. He seeks to understand Luther's psychological problems without reference to the unique culture and society in which the man lived. He imposes categories out of modern culture, believing these will be adequate.

Stabell: And why do you think this happens? Why does he do it that way?

Smith: Well, his questions are inadequate. He thinks he can understand a man in purely "psychological" terms. He doesn't seem to see that the very interest in the "psychological" is a modern phenomenon.

Stabell: Would you say that the picture he gives us of Luther's life is false in any sense?

Smith: Yes, I don't believe you can really understand a man in terms of modern psychology without references to the culture around him. You are inevitably going to distort the facts of his life. But it sounds to me like this ■ a set up. I'm being framed.

Stabell: You caught me! But let me flesh out how I think it works in our situation here. When you look at Luther's Germany you go at it with a particular set of questions — questions derived from the modern world and your experience in that world. You want to understand why we are the way we

are. Besides that you have a particular understanding of "the way we are." You define that in terms of economic rationality, individual political freedom and equality before the law, and the "cult of the individual" that pervades our structures of consciousness, our rationales of action. So when you look at ■ man like Luther you inevitably define his experience in the light of its significance for yours. Take, as ■ specific example, your understanding of the category "faith." It is true that you see that category as a very significant one in history. But because you tend to measure its significance in terms of "the way we are now," it seems to me that your understanding of faith is very different from mine. What you look for is that state of mind that has certain historical consequences. Faith is that hope and confidence which allows a man to break with accepted definitions of the world and thus brings in the opportunities for new social and economic patterns to develop. The content of that faith, the objects or subjects of that faith, are relatively insignificant. And so you tend to confuse what I would call true faith — trust in the God of Scripture — with a vague mysticism and supra-rational experiences of many kinds.

Smith: But again you seem to misunderstand what it is we are trying to do in sociology. We aren't after ■ sharp definition of faith! We are trying to understand "the way we are now." It could be that some of our definitions need sharpening. But that is a matter of degree and precision, not the radical thing you seem to want to make it.

Stabell: It isn't just ■ matter of the particulars, though. My objection is not simply that individual experiences are misinterpreted. The whole view of history is wrong. You simply cannot understand world history the way you want to, in terms of the emergence of universalizing individualism. From a Christian point of view, what history is about is the responses of men to God's self-revelation — responses of obedience and disobedience, of faith in or disregard for God's word. It has to do with man's rebellion against God and turning from His light, with the darkness that ensues, and with God's plan to save His own from that darkness.

Smith: With this kind of view of history, well, you don't really have history at all! You used the terms yourself: what you have is a battle between darkness and light, faith and unbelief. There is not room here for a real concern with historical detail and particularity. What you have is, as I said before, ■ kind of "history of the spirit." How can you say that this is sociology? Where is your interest in social institutions and cultural process?

Stabell: On the contrary. I'm convinced that it is only the Biblical perspective that is truly concerned with particularity and individuality. When you look at Martin Luther, or better yet, Luther's barber, are you really interested in the man himself? Or are you rather concerned with his relevance in and for your scheme? I dare say you would hardly even think about Luther's barber except in a tangential sense. Weber, in fact, makes the statement that it is not particular historical figures for their own sake that a sociologist should look at, but rather their relevance for understanding the Western Culture-situation. On the other hand, one of the things I find exciting about the potential of ■ Biblically controlled sociology is precisely this question. In Scripture, every man, woman and child has ■ significance before God as His creature and as the bearer of rights and responsibilities from Him. In terms of cultures, the West is not more significant than any other. It does not in itself set the standards for determining what is or ■ not to be considered relevant data.

Significance is not measured on its terms. The only standard is the kingdom of God and the commands of God's word. Every human society is judged by these criteria.

Smith: Well, this has been interesting. I'm afraid you'll have to leave me in unbelief! I must say that I don't see how you can hold this kind of dogmatic position when there are so many faiths in the world. But I do find it intriguing as ■ sociologist how it is that commitments like yours develop and are maintained even in our own secular culture. I suppose in part it is a reaction to the loss of mystery. You have obviously had some sort of religious experience that is denied to most of us. Not all of us are "of the elect." I must say, though, that you have yet to convince me that you are really going to be able to do sociology.

Stabell: To be honest, I often feel exactly that way myself. But I think that is because I tend to accept your definition of the discipline. When I read the Bible, though, and when I look at history from that point of view I am again and again struck by the inadequacy of most sociological categories, and the possibilities of, or better, the absolute necessity of doing sociology Biblically. Every other perspective ends up distorting the real situation, obscuring the fact that men everywhere have access to, but turn away from, God's kindness in showing Himself. What you have called "structures of consciousness" are culturally embodied and maintained ways of reconstructing or reinterpreting reality and the clear testimony of that reality to the existence and character of the God of the Bible. All this is the result of an enmity against the Creator, and its consequences in real history are horrible! But no matter how horrible, I think it is important for those of us who are Christian to be able to look at various kinds of cultures and understand them Biblically. Do you understand better now what I'm trying to do?

Smith: I think so. But I certainly don't think it will begin to be an adequate approach. Your question is much too narrow, for one thing. Nothing really interests you except religion, and that from a very biased point of view! Even as a theological method your perspective denies the validity of most men's experience of the divine. How then can you hope to deal with sociological phenomena on their own terms?

Stabell: But Dr. Smith, do you deal with "sociological phenomena on their own terms" or in terms of their relevance for ■ particular culturally and historically conditioned sociological structure of consciousness? How is your framework not religious in a broad sense? You do, after all, offer answers to religious questions, even if the answers are almost entirely skeptical and agnostic. But that, too, is a commitment. And in order to do sociology you have also had to make positive commitments. You have had to assume a particular ontology and epistemology. You have had to assume that societies and cultures are in fact real things and that they are knowable in a significant sense. Not all sociologists, even, are willing to do that. That leaves them merely playing games, quite literally, with the data, but they have despaired of anything else! Then there are others that are convinced that Marxist economic determinism is the only way to understand the realities of social existence.

Smith: My response to these colleagues, as to you, is that they are not

sufficiently aware of world history in a comparative perspective. My advice to you, if you really want to stay with sociology, is simply that you do more history. Compare cultures, look closely at the details of the experiences of various peoples and how they express their existence. If you do that, with ■ real sociological interest, I think you will eventually have to see the narrowness of your point of view.

Stabell: In many ways I would very much like to do the kind of historical and sociological work you are suggesting, although I am convinced that, far from lessening my commitment to Scripture, such exposure to the facts can only confirm and deepen my appreciation for the ultimate truth of its interpretations. Even from my relative ignorance of any scope or breadth of history at this point I think I can see how Jesus Christ will be glorified, ultimately, in each and every fact.



"Peasant and Knight" (German woodcut, 1521)

There is Nothing New Under the Sun

Jerry Bergman

A cursory examination of the world of product design reveals that most of the thousands of manufactured products copy to a large extent "natural" patterns, designs, etc., that God incorporated in His creation. Vinyl, for example — as found in car seats, desk tops, chair seats and a myriad of other products — is made out of molded soft plastic (a liquid poured into a mold), and proposed to look like either leather or some other "natural" product. The grooves and printed color patterns that are found in the vinyl are not needed, but are incorporated in the pattern so the vinyl looks like animal skin or hide. This "natural" pattern is seen by most as more beautiful than the "plain" vinyl. Today, more and more products are incorporating the color, grain texture and appearance of cowhide, wood or other "natural" patterns. Most luxury cars as well as many lower-priced models typically contain some type of artificial wood grain pattern on their dashboards and door panels. Artificial grains are usually printed on paper, plastic or some other material by a process similar to printing a "photograph" on a sheet of paper. Looking at the myriad of products available today — such as light fixtures, lamps, desks, and most furniture, to name a few, one finds that if they are not composed of some natural product, the metal or plastic is shaped or made to look like some "natural" product.

Even where man has not directly copied the natural world, careful examination shows that his works are invariably a modification of some aspect of it — essentially taking something normally found and changing it in some simple way. This is especially true of oil paintings. Throughout most of history the majority of art works were essentially copies of something in the natural world, i.e., paintings of people, birds, nature scenes, animals or other things normally found in the natural world. Recently, though, various art forms called "surrealism" have proven popular. Although the effort here is to create something "new", this is probably not possible. What is done is that a natural theme in nature is taken and changed in some way, i.e., the sky, instead of being blue, is red, the grass, instead of being green, is purple; or other variations are used which only change something in the natural world. Other changes might include variations in the size and shape (or some other clear alteration) of the various natural objects usually involving such things as color, shape, position, or a recombining of other natural elements. There is one major exception to this, and that is the design of machines and the painting of "mechanical" shapes, or various solid shapes or masses of color blended in

Jerry Bergman receives his mail c/o Dept. of Psychology, Spring Arbor College, Spring Arbor, MI 49283.

some fashion to show movement (called "modern art"). Most of these man-made shapes, though, are predominantly geometrical, i.e., a combination of clearly round, square, or straight surfaces.

In product design, copying of natural patterns is common. For example, ■ common type of glass is where the glass contains hundreds of minute cracks. This "natural process" was common and unavoidable at one time, but today it is done primarily for beauty. This is also true of "unevenness" and imperfections (such as air bubbles) in the glass surface, which was at one time a result of the crude methods of making glass, but today is artificially induced to help the object become more "attractive". A popular type of paint, commonly found on medical and scientific instruments and known as "crackle paint," is ■ type of paint designed so its different layers dry at different speeds (thus buckling up, leaving a bumpy surface). Cracking was at one time a common "problem" with painting, but now is ■ popular finish; this, too, at one time resulted from a "natural" occurrence.

When man-made objects are closely compared with "natural" objects, one finds what man has made is often crude, but what is "natural" is not even comparable with man's efforts. If one takes a beautiful watch and looks at it with ■ scanning electron microscope, one finds the metal parts appear to be crudely machined with many flaws and imperfections. On the other hand, if one has seen the many pictures of the natural world taken with the scanning electron microscope, one cannot help but notice that the more carefully the natural world is looked at, the greater the complexity and symmetry of design. It is as if a curtain was removed to reveal a totally different world beyond the world which is apparent around us.

As Barron (1969:10) concludes: "Creativity may be defined quite simply as the ability to bring something new into existence . . . since human beings are not able to make something out of nothing the human act of creation always involves a reshaping of given materials whether physical or mental. The 'something new' is a form made by the reconstruction of, or regeneration from, something old." To make an automobile, for example, man simply reshapes materials already existing in nature and does, in essence, nothing more than "move around" the materials. True, it requires ■ tremendous amount of skill, manpower, energy, etc., in order to properly rearrange the materials, but man, in essence, creates nothing new. Most of man's development has been redoing past work, using very slight "changes" from the natural world. In time he develops his product into something he views as "new." Yet, it is not really "new" at all.

Reference

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Why Be Moral?

Ellen Myers

"I suppose there are two views about everything," said Mark.

"Eh? Two views? There are a dozen views about everything until you know the answer. Then there's never more than one." — C.S. Lewis¹

It has been said that

... one of the chief goals of ethics is to see if rational grounds can be given in support of any moral judgments, standards, or rules, and if so, to specify what those ground are.²

After having sampled "a dozen views" about morality, this writer arrived at what she believes to be "the one answer." It is based on the premise that man is a moral being, because he is created by the moral God of the Bible in that God's image. What makes man man, as distinct from animals, is that man is so constituted that he must live by a moral system essentially like the Ten Commandments. The moral rules of most if not all societies bear this out, as they are largely alike.³ This likeness points to a common origin of morality, or rather, a common origin is its most plausible explanation.

Anthropology seems to concur in the view that *religion* lies near the root of morality:

If we ... ask about the origin of society's values, we find a long and gradual development of traditions and customs which have given stability to the society's way of life, and whose obscure beginnings lie in ritual magic, taboos, tribal ceremonies, and religious worship ... the origin of a set of values seems to have little or nothing to do with rational, controlled thought. Neither individuals nor societies originally acquire their moral beliefs by means of logical reasoning or through the use of an objective method for gaining knowledge.⁴

In view of the above, the thesis that all moral systems descend in more or less pure form from the primeval moral law written by virtue of supernatural creation within the nature of man by his Creator, the Triune God of the Bible, is offered as rational grounds of this writer's conviction that the question, "Why be moral?" must be answered, "Not to be moral is to die as man, and then to die in due course as a sub-human monstrosity."

Starting Point

Man's creation in God his Creator's image is thus this writer's starting point. I choose it over against the miscellaneous arbitrary starting points of philosophies pretending to examine values reflectively, yet avoiding reflection upon the true origin of values. It is my starting point because any starting point arbitrarily set somewhere within human nature, society, or man's environment in a naturalistic, immanentistic manner cannot lead to conclusions taking all factors of human nature, society, or man's environment into account. One needs as it were a "view from above," both to avoid subjectivity

by being oneself part of what one attempts to evaluate, and to see the whole, rather than parts arbitrarily singled out for analysis without first having seen them integrated, and hence unable to fit them together pursuant to analysis. (And suppose analysis itself alters the original condition?) To begin with man's creation by God, i.e. beginning with God Himself as the standard and model of man, is to fulfill this need for a *transcendent* starting point, with ■ "view from above," (not from within).

Man's creation in God his Creator's image ■ chosen as a starting point also because man's identity is thereby defined. Man is rescued thereby from being made ■ means to the ends of his fellow men. He is rescued thereby from assuming absolute authority over them, because he is responsible to his Creator. He is rescued thereby from existential alienation, for he is like His Creator and related to Him. He is endowed with dignity, the awesome dignity of "being like God." Because he is a created being whose creation was his Creator's choice, he, too, *can choose*, being his Creator's image. Note that if man absurdly, perversely chooses to "be like God" by "not being like God," namely, by not living by the moral law by which he is created to live, he chooses to die, logically and inevitably, because in so doing he chooses not to be a man, by definition. For man, by definition, is that creature which is God's image. If he is no longer God's image, he no longer *is* — he has lost his *identity*, his *self*.

Man's creation in God his Creator's image is chosen as a starting point, further, because to begin with God in this manner is to be relieved of the necessity for man acquiring, by himself, true knowledge, a prerequisite for valid normative ethics (see Section II). With God above and behind man, man receives the true knowledge he needs to have as a creature exercising dominion *under God*.

To start with the creation of man in God's image, in accordance with the Bible, gives us one further and tremendous advantage. It is that the God of the Bible is *One God in Three Persons*. In God Himself we are offered our model for "more than one" living "as one." Therefore men, being "more than one" are to live "as one." Because God is not "alone," "it is not good that man should be alone," and "a helpmeet" is provided for him out of his own body.⁵ God, the Triune God, "is love."⁶ So, too, mankind is to be one in love.

No other religious model offers us this "more-than-one-one" God Who so strikingly parallels our universal human condition of having to coexist with and depend upon our fellow men. The supreme, absolute and general moral principle summed up by Jesus Christ (Perfect God and Perfect Man in one person) follows from this starting point:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.⁷

Definition

John Stuart Mill, the father of modern Utilitarianism, is sometimes and, I believe with pleasure, justly faulted for his vagueness in defining the concepts "happiness" and "desirable," which are vital ■ his philosophy.⁸ This writer

would avoid a master's shortcoming by defining the term "moral" as follows:

To be moral is to live according to the belief that all men everywhere and at all times ought to act according to certain universal rules of conduct or normative ethics, independent of their own interest or inclination. To be moral agents, we must be able: (1) to differentiate between "good" and "evil"; (2) to know the effects of our actions upon ourselves and/or other human beings; (3) to have relevant free will. Points (1) and (2) require true knowledge of ourselves, of our fellow men, and of our environment, as well as of past history and probable future events and consequences of present events.

Beliefs amoral by the above definitions are, for example: (1) cultural relativism, i.e., "what is right is right only within and for a particular culture;" (2) historical relativism, i.e., "what is right is right only within and for a particular period of history;" (3) racist or elitist philosophies with "moral" rules not valid for all men equally; (4) ethical egoism including Jean-Paul Sartre's "individual self-authentication," "self-actualization" procedures hawked as ethics by "Third Force" psychologists, or the "objectivism" of Ayn Rand.

Also amoral would be any "ethics" wiping out all differentiation between "good" and "evil," such as the Marquis de Sade's *Bedroom Philosophy* ("La Philosophie dans le Boudoir") which proceeds from the starting point: "What is, is right."⁹

Of course fatalistic, pantheistic or deterministic ethics must be amoral because they must deny relevant free will. They view the universe as self-contained and purely materialistic. They deny the existence of anyone or anything apart from or beyond this self-contained material universe. Hence man is not a free moral agent. He is "nothing-but" the product of genetic inheritance and environmental influences evolved over eons of time. Some rearward debates are carried on over the relative importance of genetic inheritance versus environment between biological and environmental reductionists in the field of psychology,¹⁰ but both alike must disallow free will except as an illusion based on ignorance. (The tenacity with which some atheist believers in evolution cling to belief in "relevant free will" based on their "moral intuition" is a paradoxical testimony to the power of even rejected, unconsciously held, vestigial Christian teaching. For on their own evolutionist, naturalist-determinist presuppositions belief in relevant free will is wishful, irrational thinking rightly despised by consistent atheist evolutionists such as Skinner-allied behaviorists.) Psychological egoism gives us an example of determinist reduction of ethics to absurdity by proclaiming, "Man *cannot* act otherwise than selfishly."

Morality and "Given" Human Nature

The last paragraph should have alerted you to the following possibility. Suppose the world view of a self-contained, purely materialistic, determinist, evolving universe, with man "nothing-but" genes plus environment minus free will is true? Had we not better first of all ascertain the facts about the universe, and especially about man's nature? For it would be folly to devise moral rules so much at variance with man's nature that man could not obey them if he wanted to. Nor can we give him any moral rules at all if he cannot act otherwise than he is made by nature. In either case, the question, "Why be moral?" is nonsense, for to be moral is impossible.

It is therefore not surprising that we find treatises on ethics honey-combed

with references to human nature. John Stuart Mill claims that man is by nature sympathetic to his fellow men.¹¹ Aldous Huxley's "Savage" in *Brave New World* bases his opposition to hedonism upon man's nature: "What you need . . . is something with tears for a change . . . Isn't there something in living dangerously?" The Controller agrees: "There's ■ great deal in it . . . that's why we've made the (Violent Passion Surrogate) treatments compulsory."¹² We find the following pessimistic gem among the sayings of Aristotle's contemporary Isocrates:

For if we are willing ■ survey human nature as ■ whole, we shall find that the majority of men do not take pleasure in the food that is the most wholesome, nor in the pursuits that are the most honourable, nor in the actions that are the noblest, nor in the creatures that are the most useful, but that they have tastes which are in every way contrary to their best interests . . . How, then, can one advise or teach or say anything of profit and yet please such people? . . . they so shun the verities of life that they do not even know their own interests . . .¹³

Suppose it is factually false that moral rules may be made equally binding for all men? David Hume tells us in his *Treatise of Human Nature*:

. . . every particular person's pleasure and interest being different, it is impossible men could ever agree in their sentiments and judgements, unless they chose some common point of view from which they might survey their object, and which might cause it to appear the same to all of them . . .¹⁴ (*emphasis added*)

Hume postulates individual differentiation between men by nature. Now suppose moral rules cannot be made equally binding for all men because men are naturally divided by class or category. This is the claim of Nietzsche's "hero-morality," built upon ■ supposed natural division of men into "masters" and "herd":

Moral systems must be compelled first of all to bow before the *gradations of rank*; their presumption must be driven home to their conscience — until they thoroughly understand at last that it is *immoral* to say that "what is right for one is proper for another."¹⁵ (*emphasis in original*)

Nietzsche further postulates as man's innate driving force his "will to power":

What is good? All that enhances the feeling of power, the Will to Power, and power itself in man . . . The weak and the botched shall perish; first principle of our humanity . . .¹⁶

If Nietzsche and other believers in men's naturally being unequal are right — then what we called moral at the outset of this paper is amoral, and to ask "Why be moral?" elicits the answer, "Why indeed!"

Morality and "Malleable" Human Nature

Is your head swimming with such conflicting claims about "given" human nature and its relevance for moral systems? Let me confound you further with the concurrent claim by psychologists and philosophers alike that human nature is not "given" but "malleable" by education, brainwashing, environmental change, or genetic engineering.

John Stuart Mill, while postulating that men by nature desire their own happiness, yet emphasizes the need for educating men especially in their

desire for the intrinsically "nobler" or "higher" pleasures:

Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favorable to keeping that higher capacity in exercise.¹⁷

Not only is education a must in Mill's scheme to cultivate men's "nobler" feelings; it is a must to uphold utilitarianism itself:

... education and opinion, which have so vast a power over human character, should so use that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association between his own happiness and the good of the whole.¹⁸ (*emphasis added*)

According to Mill, then, education and opinion must bridge the gap between mere individual ethical egotism and utilitarianism standing for "the greatest good for the greatest number." With tongue in cheek, this writer cannot resist quoting here, as a logical extension and implementation of Mill's statement, the favorite Nazi slogan prominently displayed in the classrooms of her youth in the Germany of the Thirties: "You are nothing, your people (nation) is everything." (Du bist nichts, dein Volk ist alles.)

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* leads to untrammelled hedonism through environmental change and genetic engineering, i.e. the breeding of a sub-normal servant class content with dull or unpleasant work, with a bit of brainwashing (sleep conditioning and electroshock) thrown in. The environmental change is a technology so highly developed that "there isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously unpleasant"¹⁹, especially with the backstop of "Christianity without tears . . . (the drug) soma."²⁰ In such a system, who needs to be "moral," that is, to act independent of his own interest or inclination?

Another version of human malleability is through social change, especially by elimination of private enterprise capitalism. We find a classical statement of this kind in Edward Bellamy's famous socialist utopia *Looking Backward*:

If you would see men again the beasts of prey they seemed in the nineteenth century, all you have to do is to restore the old social and industrial system, which taught them to view their natural prey in their fellow-men and find their gain in the loss of others.²¹

Half a century later, another utopia, George Orwell's *1984*, paints the nightmare world of "Ingsoc" (English Socialism), with Nietzschean will to power running rampant, and with National (Nazi) and International (Communist) socialism as its real-life models.²²

Morality and "The Abolition of Man"

This postulated natural malleability of man as a basis for morality raises the question whether to be "moral" by *outside* conditioning has any meaning at all. This question is the subject of Anthony Burgess's gripping novel *A Clockwork Orange*. Here Alex, a vicious young hoodlum, undergoes the "Ludovico Treatment" to be "transformed out of all recognition"²³ to become "... your true Christian, . . . ready to turn the other cheek, ready to be crucified rather

than crucify, sick to the very heart at the thought even of killing a fly."²⁴ The prison chaplain warns: "The question is whether such a technique can really make a man good. *Goodness comes from within, 6655321. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be ■ man.*"²⁵ (*emphasis added*) The conditioning does not last. Alex reverts from being ■ conditioned non-violent "clockwork orange" to chosen viciousness.

Burgess contends, of course, that relevant free will is what makes man man, and that to annihilate it even to produce a model citizen is to annihilate man. The conditioning's failure is the hope of man's survival in his identity as a moral agent, for which the price exacted by the suffering caused by those choosing immoral or amoral behavior ■ not too high. (The God of the Bible agrees; it costs Him the humiliation and crucifixion of His only begotten Son.) John Stuart Mill does not entirely disagree:

Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures . . . It is better to be ■ human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.²⁶

Morality and Knowledge

Not only knowledge about the nature of man and the universe, but also knowledge about mankind's past experience (history) is required to "be moral." We can do no better than quote John Stuart Mill:

. . . there has been ample time, namely the whole past duration of the human species (for calculating and weighing the effects of any line of conduct on the general happiness). During all that time mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions; *on which experience all the prudence as well as all the morality of life are dependent.*²⁷ (*emphasis added*)

But may we rely on recorded history? Is it not rewritten time and again by revisionists of this or that school? Are not corrections of the received record made necessary repeatedly due to discovery of previously undiscovered sources? Can we ever truly know what really happened in the past?

With nothing but tenuous and conflicting claims about empirical facts as our guides, how is it possible for us to arrive at rational grounds in support of any moral judgments, standards or rules, one of the chief goals of ethics (see quote 2, page 1)? Is not analytical ethics itself vitiated thereby — unless, of course, we never mean to do anything in the first place but to strive about subjective hypotheses and opinions for the sake of intellectual titillation, and abandon all attempts to establish normative ethics.

Hold on, cries the disciple of Auguste Comte's *Logical Positivism*. The social sciences from which you hope to receive true knowledge are themselves built upon the shifting sands of theories rather than the exact standards of weights and measurements undergirding the natural sciences. Let us turn to the natural sciences for validation of our thoughts. Let us explain human life, human behavior — and by inference, human morality — in material and physiological terms; the reform of society is then nothing but ■ scientific problem.

Alas, we are in no way extricated from our precarious epistemological situation; for man's "knowledge" acquired through the natural sciences

suffers from the same defects as his "knowledge" acquired through the social sciences. The problems are: (1) bias in the very way knowledge is sought after; (2) fragmentation of knowledge because our methodology in acquiring it is analytic, not holistic. We do well to absorb the implications of the following statement by Imre Lakatos, formerly professor of logic at the University of London, and now of the London School of Economics:

There are and can be no sensations unimpregnated by expectations and *therefore there is no natural (i.e., psychological) demarcation between observational and theoretical propositions* . . . The truth value of the "observational" propositions cannot be indubitably decided; *no factual proposition can ever be proved from an experiment*. Propositions can only be derived from other propositions, they cannot be derived from facts: one cannot prove statements from experiences.²⁸ *(emphasis and parenthesis in original)*

Because knowledge acquired by science comes to us in fragmented bits and pieces, based on the "scientific method" of analysis and abstraction, it can afford us "not reality but only a view." What we need is ■ "new natural philosophy" or "regenerate science" which, "when it explained it would not explain away. *When it spoke of the parts it would remember the whole.*"²⁹ *(emphasis added)*

Hume's Gap

Suppose we could overcome all these difficulties and had acquired sufficient and reliable knowledge about the nature of man and the universe. Can we now proceed to formulate ethical norms, substantiating them by the rational grounds of empirical evidences? Can we say: "Why be moral? Because the facts are such and such?"

My poor naturalist materialist friends — we cannot. There is an insurmountable logical hurdle between us and such an answer: *Hume's Gap*. It lies between observational data and ethical commands. It has never been bridged by a secular philosopher. Let David Hume, that invaluable sceptic, explain it:

In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author . . . makes observations concerning human affairs; when of ■ sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions *is* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given . . . how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume ■ recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention wou'd subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceiv'd by reason.³¹ *(emphasis in original)*

One cannot move directly back and forth between propositions of fact and ethical commands, because "this is" cannot, even if true, lead directly to

"therefore you have a moral duty to do that." The desired purpose and goal of the moral action demanded must first be defined, and then be accepted as desirable, by those to whom the moral command is issued. The omission of this essential intermediate step, incidentally, is the reason why John Stuart Mill's definition of "happiness" and "desirable" is faulty: certain kinds of "happiness" may be "desired," yet not "desirable," and vice versa. (The "desirable" and the "desired" are not identical, Mill to the contrary notwithstanding.)

Having recovered from the shock produced by Hume's Gap itself, let us ponder its corollary already quoted above, namely, "that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, NOR IS PERCEIVED BY REASON."³² (emphasis added) Logic confirms here what anthropology told us earlier, namely, that "neither individuals nor societies originally acquire their moral beliefs by means of logical reasoning or through the use of an objective method for gaining knowledge." (see footnote 4)

Is it mere superstition, then, to seek for the *source*, the *origin* of "intuition," "feeling" or "thirst" within us for a "distinction of vice and virtue," between "good" and "evil," in a supernatural Creator, and "not merely in the relations of objects?" Is not faith in "objective science" the *real* superstition?

Summary and Conclusion

In this necessarily limited discussion this writer has concentrated upon the problems of (1) an immanentistic starting point; (2) human nature viewed as a determinist "given" and hence rendering volitional morality absurd; (3) human nature viewed as "malleable" from without, and hence also rendering morality absurd and threatening man's identity as man; (4) the impossibility of acquiring true knowledge of immanentist presuppositions; (5) the logical impossibility of proceeding from an "is" to an "ought" (Hume's Gap).

It is now time to arrive at a conclusion. As usual, our conclusion will depend on our starting point. If we start with the determinist-evolutionist view of the universe as self-contained and "nothing-but" matter in motion, and man as "nothing-but" a phenomenon therein — then by all means let us cast aside absolute morality as a mirage, gone with the historical periods where it arose. Of course we feel at home with some form of Hegelian dialectic materialistic relativism, and the more or less dictatorial conduct of mankind's affairs by some sort of "elite" — Mill's "beings of higher faculties" or "instructed persons"³³, Huxley's trained technocrats, Orwell's Inner Party, Plato's oligarchy of philosophers, or what have you.

Or else we can start — and conclude — with the Biblical creation of man in the image of the Triune God his Creator, Provider and Saviour/Redeemer, in which view the question, "Why be moral?" is equivalent to the question, "Why live?" with total meaning for each human being, you, me, each and every moment of our lives, a meaning which not even death can destroy. For if man is created in the image of the ever-living God of the Bible — then he, too, has the potential of eternal life.

The choice is yours.

Postscript

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, I should make it clear that I

originally received my starting point, as Hume and anthropology would rightly surmise, neither by means of logical reasoning, nor through the use of an objective method for gaining knowledge (which latter anyhow does not exist — see Lakatos quote).

Rather, in a situation of emotional and intellectual bankruptcy (it is true that I had sampled “a dozen views”), ironically amidst career and material prosperity utilitarians to a man would have called “desirable,” I called upon the God of the Bible to make Himself known to me if He existed — not as a philosophical or religious concept (which could not have heard my call), but as a PERSON. He did.

While I stand by the preceding essay, and in particular by every word of Section I, I must add this postscript so as not to suppress the most important, vital truth about God — that He is a PERSON, love in person, creatorhood in person, the moral law in person, justice and mercy in person, joy and peace in person. Creation and the Bible reveal Him to the senses and the mind; Jesus Christ, God Incarnate as a human Person, also reveals Himself to us person-to-person. As I must meet you yourself in person and walk and talk with you (and not merely about you) if I would truly know you — so you and I must meet God Himself, in person, and walk and talk with Him (and not merely about Him) if we would truly know Him. He is not proud; He is waiting and willing that we should.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*. Macmillan, New York, N.Y. 1965, Tenth Printing 1971, p. 72.
- ² Paul W. Taylor, *Principles of Ethics: An Introduction*. Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., Encino, CA 1975, p. 26.
- ³ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*. Macmillan, New York, N.Y. 1965, Fourteenth Printing 1976, pp. 95-121.
- ⁴ Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 15.
- ⁵ The Bible: Genesis 1:27, 2:18.
- ⁶ The Bible: I John 4:8, 16.
- ⁷ The Bible: Matthew 22:37-40.
- ⁸ Richard Norman, *Reasons for Action*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1971, p. 39-40 also Dorothy Mitchell: *Mill's Theory of Value*, in Joel Feinberg and Henry West, editors; *Moral Philosophy*, Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., Encino, CA 1977, p. 171.
- ⁹ cf. R.J. Rushdoony, *The Politics of Pornography*. Arlington House, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1975.
- ¹⁰ Paul D. Ackerman, “Considerations Regarding a Creation Model for Experimental Psychology.” *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly*, 1979, Vol. 1 (3), p.5.
- ¹¹ Feinberg and West, *op. cit.* p. 123.
- ¹² *Ibid.* p. 169.
- ¹³ Joseph A. Gittler, *Social Thought Among the Early Greeks*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1941, p. 126.
- ¹⁴ Quoted in Richard Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- ¹⁵ Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*. Simon & Schuster, New York, N.Y., 1961, Twelfth Paperback Printing, p. 317.

- ¹⁶ Feinberg & West, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- ²¹ Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*. Random House, The Modern Library, New York, N.Y. 1942, p. 225.
- ²² George Orwell, 1984.
- ²³ Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*. W.W. Norton & Co., New York, N.Y. 1963, p. 92.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- ²⁶ Feinberg & West. *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.
- ²⁸ Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, editors: *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 74, 99.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- ³⁰ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, pp. 89-90.
- ³¹ David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Book III, Part I, Section I.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ Feinberg & West, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

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Book Review

The Singer by Calvin Miller. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1975. 151 pp. \$3.95

It is no wonder Scripture commands that song be a part of worship, for it is such a unique and joyful expression of the human spirit — a form of expression reserved only for man, at least in both words and music. Calvin Miller's selection of a singer as an extended metaphor of the life and ministry of Christ is an appropriate and Biblical one, and *The Singer* is itself a song of praise in retelling the good news.

Miller's poetic allegory of the life of Christ (the first of a trilogy, continuing with *The Song* and concluding with *The Finale*) comes alive for the reader in Part I when the young Singer is prodded in his spirit to sing a song that he knows the world may not want to hear. Not only does a chief conflict of the story begin here, the conflict within the Singer himself, but also the relationship of his song to Creation is hinted at. The heavens beckon the Singer to sing the Ancient Star Song, because "We never/ could have been without the/ melody that you alone can/ sing" (p. 6).

Miller carries out his metaphor consistently. The Singer, who is a carpenter by trade, finally answers the incessant call to be a troubadour of the Ancient Star Song and is "baptized" by the Ringer Singer. The metaphor continues with the introduction of a counter-melody. In Part V the Singer encounters the World Hater in the desert, and the Satan-figure plays a curiously sweet song on his own silver flute. Although nearly lured by the song, the Singer resists. Later, he meets others who have been caught by the Hater's tune — a woman in harlotry, a crippled child, a man insane — all ruined by the silver flute; all redeemed by the Singer's voice.

The Singer as Creator, hinted at in Part I is described in Part VII.

"Love," sang the Spirit Son
and the mountains came.
More melody, and life
began to grow. (p. 38)

The creation of earth and man springs from the song of the Singer, reminiscent of C.S. Lewis's Aslan, who sang Narnia into existence.

One of the highlights of the work, a dramatic narrative of redeeming grace, is the Singer's encounter with the harlot, a "friendship seller." She propositions the Singer:

"Are you betrothed?" she asked.
"No, only loved," he answered.
"And do you pay for love?"
"No, but I owe it everything." (p. 62)

He talks with her, and in their conversation Miller captures that delicately direct ability of the Savior to probe, pity and persuade the lost. When he had taught her his song, he left. Just then a "friendship buyer" approached the woman.

"Are you betrothed?" he asked.
"No, only loved," she answered.

"And do you pay for love?"

"No, but I owe it everything." (p. 66)

Unfortunately, such highlights as this one are dimmed by difficulties in the poem that are both technical and substantive. Here and there Miller gets heavy-handed by overstating, an anathema to poetry. As examples, note the final statement in each of the next two excerpts. While the Singer and the River Singer stood waist-deep in the river, "they waited for the music to begin./ It did" (p. 17). During the interrogation and torture of the Singer by the Keepers of the Ancient Ways,

They placed the
Singer's hand upon the block and
brought the crushing mallet down.

The Singer winced. (p. 110)

But probably the most obtrusive overstatement, precisely because it occurred in one of the finest parts of the work, is this unnecessary transition after the Singer leaves the converted harlot and the friendship buyer approaches.

And from his little distance,
the Singer heard her use his
very words.

"Are you betrothed?" the buyer asked her.

"No, only loved," she answered. (p. 66)

The reader *knows* these are his very words. These lapses in subtlety are devastating, especially at such crucial points. Sentimentality is a crippling disease of literature, and while the little girl whom the Singer healed needed no doubt *her* legs, Miller crippled his story at this point. Her sobbing pleas to the Father not to have to crawl in the streets again conjure only images of heart-rending melodrama. Later, as she and the resurrected Singer walk through the field, her "little hand" in his beautiful "gentle hand" is just too tritely sweet (p. 44).

The World Hater has some grand moments, such as his part in the trial disguised as a Keeper of the Ancient Ways and his reported seduction of the woman into harlotry. But overall he is a flat character, lacking those subtleties and conflicts within himself and throes of frustration that Milton used to win the world's heart to his Satan. The World Hater has that red-suited, devilish laugh at the "crucifixion" when he contemplates victory; he taunts and leers at the helpless crippled girl; he plays a "sweet" song on his flute but there is nothing sweet in himself to cast him properly as the Angel of Light. In short, there is nothing attractive about the World Hater, and that makes him a poor Satan-figure and a flat character.

Despite its weaknesses the very appearance and success of *The Singer* should be applauded. We all desire such creative work thrive and increase. And the poetic concept of the Singer as Creator and Redeemer and much of the imagery and narration of the work delight the Christian soul who has hungered for a latter-day Milton or Lewis. Its weaknesses do not prevent *The Singer* from being worthwhile and enjoyable reading.

— Reviewed by Kathy Hutson-Olson

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